

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3095

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology, Energy & Communications

Title: An act relating to enhancing interoperability of the state's emergency communications system through the procurement and deployment of a public safety communications system.

Brief Description: Concerning public safety communications.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericks, Haler, Morris, Nixon, Sump, Crouse, Wallace, P. Sullivan, Hudgins, Takko, Sells, Simpson, Hasegawa, Green and Morrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology, Energy & Communications: 1/31/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes a statewide public safety communications system by June 30, 2012.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Crouse, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ericks, Hudgins, Nixon, P. Sullivan, Sump, Takko and Wallace.

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

In 2003, the Washington State Information Services Board established the State Interoperability Executive Committee (Committee) to take inventory of and evaluate all state and local government-owned public safety communications systems, and to prepare a statewide public safety communications plan. The plan was to set forth recommendations for executive and legislative action to ensure that public safety communications systems can communicate with one another and conform to federal law and regulations governing emergency communication systems and spectrum allocation. The plan was to include specific goals for improving interoperability of public safety communications systems and identifiable benchmarks for achieving those goals.

In December of 2004, the Committee submitted its final report to the Legislature as required by statute. In its report, the Committee found that the majority of public safety responders are

not able to communicate effectively or directly with their federal, state, regional, local, or tribal counterparts. The Committee also found there is a lack of financial resources to support a vision of interoperability within the state.

In November of 2005, the Committee completed their Technical Implementation Plan (TIP). The TIP provides a high-level approach for planning the transition of the current agency-based public safety radio systems to a standards-based, frequency-independent, multiple subsystems technology architecture. A key component of the TIP is moving towards a statewide, Project 25 technology. Project 25 (P-25) is a communications interoperability standard supported and used by the federal government, numerous state governments, and by the communications industry. After formally adopting the TIP, the Committee adopted a requirement that when agencies purchase new communications equipment, it must be P-25 compatible.

The TIP recommends system implementation over a six-year period, starting with a one-year planning and procurement phase that includes developing detailed technical specifications and selecting and procuring the system technical components. The cost of the proposed system is estimated at approximately \$257 million over the six-year implementation period. Proposed system recurring operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$177 million over the projected ten-year life cycle of the technology. The total estimated cost of acquisition, operation, and maintenance of the proposed system is \$435 million.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A statewide public safety communications system must be built by June 30, 2012. This system must have the following components:

- a centrally managed system of system architectures that can facilitate the sharing of assets between state and local governments;
- the ability for non-state agencies to interconnect their radio systems with the state's radio over internet protocol-based interoperability system;
- a mutual-aid communications system deployed across the state to enable interoperability across the commonly used public safety frequency bands;
- a statewide, P-25 standards-based, frequency independent system that will be in place that uses equipment common to all agency-focused systems; and
- a statewide mobile data system that provides low and medium speed data communications capabilities for participating subscribers.

The State Interoperability Executive Committee must report annually to the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management on the design, accomplishments, and remaining tasks, as well as recommendations, by September 1 of each year.

The development, operation, maintenance, and administration of a shared public safety communications system will use funds from the Data Processing Revolving Fund in the state treasury.

This bill will be implemented to the extent that sufficient funds are available from state, federal, and local sources.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the entity who may continue maintenance and operation of existing public safety communications systems from the Department of Information Services to the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2006.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Interoperability is an important goal: seeking the technical ability and the infrastructure for critical emergency personnel to be able to talk to one another. The previous bill on this topic sent an important message to local governments: that P-25 will be the standard going forward. This effort complements the Governor's supplemental budget request for interoperability efforts. Additional funds are needed in order to accomplish this task and get this public safety communications system established in the state. While implementation earlier than 2012 is possible, the costs involved are substantial. Implementation will need to be phased in. State agencies and local governments will need to work together to figure out the best way to go about implementing this bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ericks, prime sponsor; Gary Robinson, Department of Information Services; and James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.